



Online Connection

A publication for members of the Outreach and Technical Assistance Network
www.otan.us

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2006

Podcasting for Adult Education

Using sound to teach language and basic skills by utilizing audio cassette and CD players along with radio is a concept that has been around for a long time. Lately, we have started using many Web sites to assign listening activities. But what are your students listening to now? It might very well be an MP3 player, a device for listening to music or any other kind of sound file that is saved in the MP3 format.

Podcasting is the process of posting a sound file on the Internet that can then be downloaded to an MP3 player. It's called podcasting because of the iPod, Apple's audio file player that currently controls 83 percent of the market. iPods and other MP3 players have become extremely popular, and are currently even being sold in vending machines at some airports. They range in cost from under \$100 to almost \$400 for the version that plays video. You can add a microphone to many models to record your own files. Not all podcasts are free, but many are.

The main advantage of podcasting for students is that if they have a player they can download files and listen at their leisure while traveling to or from school, washing the dishes, or working out at the gym. Instructors have begun experimenting with a variety of possibilities. Many are using the Web site, Podomatic, www.podomatic.com, because it's free to post a podcast and easy to use.

The adult education examples we have so far come from ESL teachers, but other program areas may also begin to experiment with podcasting as well. Students in any class can record and post their oral presentations. Instructors can post assignments, directions, and other activities. It will also be a useful tool for professional development. You can now download podcasts of lectures from Stanford University and other schools. Why not download a podcast on planning a multi-level lesson or teaching pre-algebra?

To explore available podcasts, try podcasts.yahoo.com or www.podcast.net. You can download some technology integration videos from OTAN by going to: www.otan.us/itap/podcasts/otanpodcast.xml.

Some examples of ESL podcasts can be found at:

www.englishcaster.com

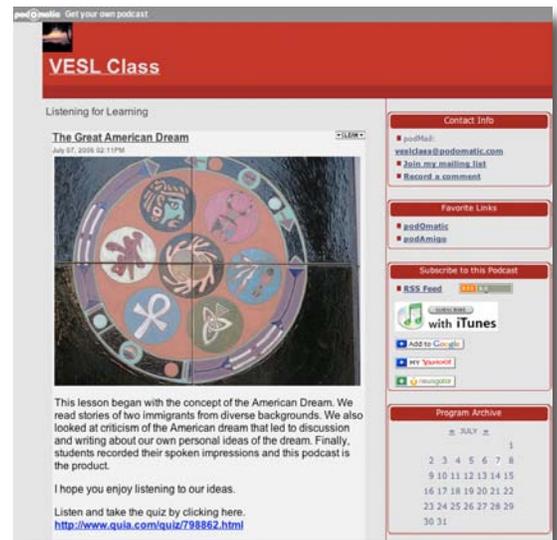
EnglishCaster is a collection of many podcasts on different aspects of learning English

a4esl.org/p

Another collection of podcasts for ESL learners

veslclass.podomatic.com

Steve Gwynne, a VESL Instructor at San Diego Community College District, posts a podcast every week for his students. The current one as of this writing features students telling about their travel dreams.



veslclass.podomatic.com

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OTAN's Online Lesson Plan Builder Gets a Life!

The Lesson Plan Builder has been online for almost a year now, and we are continuing to add features and make improvements. Located at www.adultedlessons.org, this tool offers teachers the opportunity to create and save a lesson plan, add handouts and assessment rubrics, and make their plans available to a substitute teacher, a group of colleagues, or to make them public. It provides a seven-stage structure to the lesson plan and makes it easy to link to CASAS and SCANS competencies.

Who Are the Users?

The exciting thing about a Web site like this is that once it goes live, it takes on a life of its own. Currently, there are 30 adult education agencies in California that have more than four teachers registered, indicating some program support for teachers to use this tool for creating and sharing lesson plans.

Los Angeles USD has over 50 teachers registered! Downey Adult School has

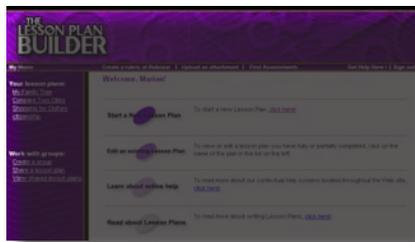
22 teachers using the site. Other agencies using The Lesson Plan Builder include Palm Springs, Hacienda La Puente, Hanford, El Monte-Rosemead and Mt. Diablo.

Of course, because this site is available worldwide, there are also users outside of California. Users come from universities, libraries, state agencies, and organizations all over the world, including New Zealand, Puerto Rico, France, and Costa Rica.

New Features

Recently we have refined the printable version of the lesson plans to be more user-friendly. We have also added the ability to create a group of colleagues with whom you can share your work. A group of teachers can work together on a set of lesson plans, or a group of lesson plans can be shared with all teachers in a department or program area.

Another new feature is the option to share your lesson plan with the world! We hope that teachers and programs will be willing to share their lesson plans publicly so that all can benefit, and we don't have to all reinvent the wheel. Lessons submitted to share will be reviewed by two knowledgeable colleagues. If there are any problems, a reviewer will work with the author until the lesson plan is ready to go public. Hopefully, the result will be a database full of tested and effective lesson plans.



www.adultedlessons.org

Technology Mentors Complete Another Year

In May, OTAN's Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) finished up its second year. First year participants showed off their projects to an audience of over 50 colleagues, administrators, and CDE consultants. Projects ranged from teacher PowerPoint presentations to student digital video projects.

Tom Elwood from Tulare Adult School described his project which took place in the small town of Pixley, population 2500 with a median income of \$23,000. To serve the needs of this predominately low-income community, Tom worked with two adult education teachers to establish



Lynn Andres from San Juan District, Pam Moyer from Woodland, and Tom Elwood from Tulare, work on their project goals.

a new computer lab and introduce appropriate educational software, all on a budget of \$320.00.

Kristi Reyes from Mira Costa College Adult Education provided technology workshops for all ESOL teachers. She



TIMAC participants celebrate the end of Year 2 of the Academy.

also mentored one teacher who began using the LCD projector and interactive whiteboard (Starboard) in her classroom on a regular basis. Kristi's teacher/mentee also set up an online presence for her course using Blackboard. Seventy-six percent of her students reported using

Blackboard outside of class at least once.

Thirteen other excellent projects were also presented. In addition, the participants who entered the Academy in the fall of 2004 completed the program this year as our first graduating class.

In October, a new group of 15 technology mentors will enter the Academy and begin their two year commitment. Branka Marceta will be coordinating the academy next year. For further information, contact Branka at (916) 228-2580 or branceta@otan.us.

Over 150 Student Success Stories

The California Adult Education Students Succeed project recognizes former adult education students who have overcome hardships and achieved life goals. As part of the celebration of the sesquicentennial of adult education, we set a goal of having 150 former students recognized on our Web site, www.adultedlearners.org, by the end of this year.

With the latest round of applications, we now have 152 awardees representing 82 adult education agencies. We will be producing four more videos on exemplary former students, to be shown at the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) conference in Sacramento on September 27-29, 2006. Students will also receive award plaques at the conference.

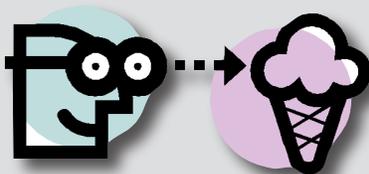


Update on OTAN's RSS Feed

Since our spring newsletter, featuring information on RSS feeds and the announcement that OTAN News is available via RSS, we have had almost 6,000 visits to our RSS subscription page. Thank you for your response! For those of you that missed the newsletter, you can download it from www.otan.us under Help | Newsletter. To subscribe to our feed, look for the red RSS link on the OTAN home page.

RSS Available

Be Cool This Summer!



...by checking out some of the free videos OTAN's Employment Training Library ships out to California educators....

Cool Job Interview Videos!

- **First Impressions on the Job Interview, AV-294**
- **Six P's of Job Interviews, AV-318**

Cool Job Success Videos!

- **Surviving on the Job, Tips for Staying Afloat, AV-323**
- **Eight Easy Ways to Lose a Job, AV-302**

Cool Special Need Videos!

- **English in the Workplace (job interview, ESL), AV-309**
- **Goal Away: Setting Goals (award winner), AV-317**

Ask the OTAN Techies

Q. I am trying to make a podcast using some sound clips I recorded on my PC. However, when I try to upload the sound files, I get an error saying that the sound clips are the wrong type. What type of files do I need and how do I make my files the correct type?

- *Ambitious Teacher*

A. The error you are receiving is due to the fact that podcasts use the MP3 file format. Most likely the sound files you recorded are WAV files. To use your files in the podcast, you should convert them from WAV to MP3.

A simple program used to do this file conversion is called Audacity audacity.sourceforge.net. Audacity is a freeware program that acts as a sound recorder as well as an easy-to-use audio editor. This program is available for Windows based computers as well as Mac OSX. Once you have downloaded and installed the program, you will also need to download the MP3 encoder software to convert your WAV files into MP3 files. Audacity recommends that you download the free LAME MP3 encoder www-users.york.ac.uk/~raa110/audacity/lame.html. Follow the instructions below to add this feature to Audacity.

Windows Computers:

1. Go to the LAME download page www-users.york.ac.uk/~raa110/audacity/lame.html.
2. Click on any link from the list of identical "lame-3.96.1" links.
3. When you finish downloading LAME, unzip it and save the file lame_enc.dll anywhere on your computer.
4. The first time you use the "Export as MP3" command, Audacity will ask you where lame_enc.dll is saved. Browse to the file and choose OK. Please note, if you delete or move the lame_enc.dll, Audacity will ask you for this file once again.

For Mac OSX Computers:

1. Go to the LAME download page www-users.york.ac.uk/~raa110/audacity/lame.html.
2. Download the version of LameLib for your operating system.
3. When you finish downloading, use Stuffit Expander to extract the files. (This may happen automatically.)
4. Save the file called "LameLib" anywhere on your computer.
5. The first time you use the "Export as MP3" command, Audacity will ask you where LameLib is saved. Browse to the file and choose OK. Please note, if you delete or move the lame_enc.dll, Audacity will ask you for this file once again.

Once everything is installed, open your sound file in Audacity. To convert your file to the MP3 format, choose FILE > EXPORT AS MP3. Accept the default options and you are done. You should have no problems uploading your podcast now.

ANNOUNCEMENT!!

Ask the Techie is now featured on the OTAN Q&A at www.otan.us/qanda/, and on Adult Ed Teachers Q&A at www.adult-edteachers.org/qanda/. You can post your tech questions at any time and get an answer from the OTAN Techies as well as other OTAN users. Check it out!

Executive Director's Message

by John Fleischman

At the recent National Educational Computer Conference (NECC), 12,000 educators from around the world participated in several excellent keynote presentations, hundreds of workshop sessions, and a vendor area that included more than 500 exhibitors. The highlight for me was the keynote presentation by Nicolas Negroponete, Founding Chairman of the MIT Media Lab. Negroponete has established a project known as One Laptop per Child, laptop.media.mit.edu, with a goal of creating a \$100 laptop. Just imagine the potential for reaching adult learners with an Internet-ready \$100 laptop. Go Negroponete!

At NECC, one of the clear content threads among workshop sessions was the growing use of the Web as a tool for communication and collaboration. I found dozens of workshops on how educators are using and integrating wikis, blogs, vlogs, videoconferencing, and podcasting. Be sure to read the lead story in this edition of Online Connection for more information about how adult educators are using podcasting technology.

While it's fascinating to think and dream about using new and emerging technologies for adult learning, reality teaches us that it's a long road to successful implementation. With that understanding, OTAN staff has worked hard the last couple of years to establish a strategic statewide process for improving technology integration. In May, OTAN's Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) finished up its second year. In October, a new cadre of technology mentors will begin their two-year commitment to TIMAC. We applaud all of the many adult educators who have been selected to participate in the TIMAC Program.



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